

SEN THOMAS EXCITED ABOUT COAL GASIFICATION PROJECT

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WASHINGTON, April 19 -- The office of Sen. Craig Thomas, R-Wyo, issued the following statement:

Sen. Craig Thomas offered the following statement upon Thursday's announcement about the development of a public-private partnership to develop an integrated gasification combined cycle power plant near Point of Rocks, Wyoming.

"I'm excited to see the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority get underway with plans for a clean coal IGCC power plant in Wyoming - their effort marks a strong positive step toward a plan that I initiated with Section 413 of the 2005 Energy Policy Act."

"We've devoted a lot of time and effort to discussing climate change - this project puts us in a position to actually do something about it."

"Constructing this plant at altitude in the West will enable our state to remain a significant contributor to the advancement of clean coal technologies that will address the concerns about carbon dioxide emissions. In addition to our vast coal reserves, our state has the geology required to sequester these emissions and a willingness to continue providing the next generation of energy for our country," Thomas said.

The Wyoming Infrastructure Authority (WIA) joined with PacifiCorp Energy today in a public-private partnership to develop an integrated gasification combined cycle (IGCC) power plant in Sweetwater County, Wyoming.

The WIA decision came after a six-month effort to establish an IGCC demonstration partnership in Wyoming. The WIA request for proposals came last July and received 17 expressions of interest.

After evaluating proposals, PacifiCorp emerged as the leading candidate for a development partnership. Senator Thomas said he was encouraged by the quality of proposals that came from Wyoming and supports a robust effort to get a value-added coal industry established in the state.

The WIA spoke with Senator Thomas today about federal funding for the project under Section 413 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The program authorizes a contribution of federal funds to support a western IGCC demonstration project using lower-ranked western coal at higher altitude.

Senator Thomas noted that the State of Wyoming is set to receive \$550 million beginning in October 2007 as a result of the Abandoned Mine Lands fund amendments made at the end of the 109th Congress.

"With the high cost of an advanced coal project such as this one, the state should consider ways to assist in making the first-ever clean coal plant with carbon sequestration a reality."